

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5056

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government Operations & Accountability
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to creating the department of archaeology and historic preservation.

Brief Description: Creating the department of archaeology and historic preservation.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen, Swecker, Prentice, Kastama, Fairley, Honeyford, Zarelli, Hewitt, Berkey, Fraser, Thibaudeau, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Rasmussen, Kline and Rockefeller).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government Operations & Accountability: 3/25/05 [DP];
Appropriations: 3/31/05, 4/2/05 [DP].

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Creates the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Green, Vice Chair; Nixon, Ranking Minority Member; Clements, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunt, McDermott, Miloscia and Schindler.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

The Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) exists within the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. The OAHP has approximately 10 employees and is helmed by the State Historic Preservation Officer.

The OAHP has responsibilities under both federal and state law. For example, under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the OAHP must be consulted with respect to the impacts federal undertakings have on historic properties. This process includes arriving at agreements with proponents of a project in order for them to obtain federal approval. Other federal responsibilities of the office include administering the State Historic Preservation Program and assisting local governments to become eligible for federal grant money.

Other responsibilities of the OAHP include nominating historic places to the state and national historic registers, maintaining an inventory of historic properties and archaeological sites, maintaining a computerized mapping system, and engaging in educational outreach.

Summary of Bill:

The OAHP is abolished and its powers and duties are transferred to the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). The Director of the DAHP, who must also serve as the State Historic Preservation Officer, is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Director may appoint deputy and assistant directors as necessary. The DAHP may be subdivided into divisions and may appoint advisory committees or councils. The DAHP is given the authority to adopt rules to keep the state in compliance with federal law. The responsibilities of the DAHP must be carried out in a manner designed to keep the state in compliance with federal law.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 8, 2005.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (In support) It is important that the historic aspect of public projects is examined. Currently, this office is buried in another agency, which makes it hard for it to deal with independent state agencies. The office should play a bigger role in the community and in transportation projects. The high overhead charged by the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development has made it a challenge to maintain federal funding. This bill will not create a super agency or cost a lot of money.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Haugen, prime sponsor; and Mary Thompson, Washington Trust for Historic Preservation.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Buri, Clements, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dunshee, Grant, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDermott, McIntire, Miloscia, Priest, Schual-Berke and Walsh.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Pearson and Talcott.

Staff: Nona Snell (786-7153).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On State Government Operations & Accountability:

No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The creation of the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation will result in \$100,000 more per year for local historic preservation projects. Local governments benefit from grants for projects that would not otherwise be funded by local governments. The additional funds would help local historic commissions carry out important work.

The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Trust for Historic Preservation support the bill. The Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation was independent until 1986, when it was added to the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. An independent agency would result in improved agency-to-agency relationships.

The overhead is based on 40 percent of salaries and benefits. The indirect costs are high because of the salaries of the office's staff who have high levels of education.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Shana Stevenson, Olympia, Tumwater, Thurston County Historic Preservation; and Mary Thompson, Washington Trust for Historic Preservation.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.